

## Editorial

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How often within an internal discourse, does our fraternity of architects involve other stakeholders and players involved in creation of the buildings? The idea of authorship in artistic creation is undoubtedly crucial and yet fraught. The master artists of renaissance were never alone in creating their masterpieces, there were always apprentices who helped finishing the works. Mughal miniature paintings, every single work, involved many hands, each specialising in distinct aspects of the making of the painting. Even today, installations, mix-media and video art etc. involves a team of people. If this is the case in seemingly singular objects like paintings and sculptures, we can imagine the complexity of creation of building objects. Ideas of collaborative practice are more prevalent and accepted today. Yet, there is a reluctance in letting go of the imagination of an architect as a Prima Donna creator.

And then, there is the issue of the life cycle of a building. Life begins in a building after the architect has left. As they say, the proof of the pudding is in eating. The conceptual and theoretical precepts of creation can best be observed in the lived experience, in how well the building functions over the years. There are other actors who take over after the architect, they oversee management and maintenance of buildings. These are normally viewed as mundane and practical roles. However, in some exceptional cases, such as in Golconde Pondicherry, these aspects were elevated to the level of art, no lesser than creation itself. And the artist in question was Mona Pinto, its building manager.

Golconde is a dormitory of Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry. Designed by Antonin Raymond, it was to house the devotees and was built under extraordinary circumstances between 1938-45. This modern, reinforced concrete structure of considerable technological complexity was built primarily by the ashram volunteers. The quality of workmanship achieved was extraordinary. Raymond has termed it the best work of his career. The charge of running and upkeep of this beautiful building was entrusted to Mona Pinto who played a vital role in preserving the sanctity of the dormitory till her death in 2004. Even today, the dormitory is cherished and maintained like a precious object. The quality of construction and the high standards of maintenance make this building look fresh even after eighty odd years.

Golconde becomes a classic case to explore the notions of authorship in a building project. Not only did it have highly crucial and documented involvement of several individuals in the design and construction phase, its upkeep has become gold standard in maintenance. Lili Boenigk writes in her essay in this issue, “Actors like Mona enable the creation and longevity of structures through practices of physical and social care. However, paradigms of authorship and creation fail to recognize many of the activities that shape structures, especially after the completion of the building object. Framing architecture as ongoing collaboration between a network of actors allows for the recognition of creators obscured by canonical, singular, typically male “architect” figures. Mona’s work in particular shows the way in which the process of creation and construction continues long after the completion of the building object.”

We can certainly hope that in this era of use and throw paradigm of demolishing and remaking of buildings, longevity and care of existing stock is not relegated to old fashioned ideas.

In this issue we present the following articles:

**Lili Boenigk** in her essay on architectural authorship questions the traditional attribution of authorship to a singular ‘designer’. By discussing in detail, the role played by Mona Pinto, the building manager of Golconde Pondicherry, she leverages conceptions of architecture as process and frameworks of emotional labour. She also discusses the roles played by other actors in the creation of the building to foreground the idea of a building object as a collective creation embodying philosophical, spiritual and material attributes of several actors besides the architects.

**Tejashree Lakras** in her review paper, extensively covers the existing literature on the subject of Heritage sites being used as filmic locations – in India as well as other parts of the world. She makes interesting links between heritage discourse and film industry and lays bare complex impacts of films on tourism, building protection, people’s association with heritage sites etc. Besides scholarly articles on these linkages, the review paper also examines existing policies that govern the usage of heritage sites for filming and finds several lacunae. The paper advocates framing of guidelines for coexistence of heritage conservation and filming productions across government and privately owned sites, privately owned sites, by considering the learnings from international practices and the uniqueness of the Indian context.

**Kanisha Mahajan** and **Kavita Pradhan** in their paper highlight the richness of historical legacy of Mubarak Mandi Palace complex in Jammu, a grade-I heritage structure that has witnessed deterioration. They go on to discuss the conservation efforts in the complex. The paper documents people’s emotions, perceptions, and opinions about the restoration and adaptive reuse of the palace complex and its surroundings. The interviews reveal

emotional connections between physical heritage and human experiences, their relationships and stories. The authors advocate strategic adaptive reuse programmes that not only focus on the physical repair and maintenance but active involvement and engagement of the people of Jammu who should be the principal beneficiary of the project.

**Amita Sinha** and **Smriti Dhariwal** in their paper similarly speak of the significance of stories and narratives linked with religious heritage sites, in their case that of the mythical memories of Krishna Leela in Vrindavan that they argue get enacted in the ritualistic performances of the devotees. Through meticulous mapping of the ritualistic practices, they unravel an idea of placemaking that goes beyond the fixed, physical landscape and enter the realm of ephemeral. The paper recognises the challenges of increasing heritage tourism and advocates that preserving of Vrindavan as a historic urban landscape will entail untangling the complex connections between tangible and intangible aspects of heritage, especially the role of place narratives in shaping beliefs, values, and ritual practices.

In this issue's '**Practice Essay**', we invite '**Walking Project**' - an organization, a program, founded by which advocates for walking friendly Indian cities. Founded by **Rishi Aggarwal**, and ably assisted by **Vedant Mhatre** and **Aishwarya Tatke**, the organisation works closely with the community and government to advocate about pedestrian infrastructure on our roads and streets. Rishi and his team members write about walkability – the most basic form of mobility. In their essay, they talk about their objectives and various tasks undertaken by them in the area of community awareness and collaborations with civic authorities about walkability and improving walking infrastructure in Mumbai.

In the **review section** of the issue, **Hemangi Kadu** has reviewed the exhibition -- 'Shifting Visions: Teaching Modern Art at the Bombay School' that explores the early years of Mumbai's iconic Sir J.J. School of Art. Kadu writes that the exhibition is not merely a historical overview, but a dynamic re-evaluation of how artistic pedagogy both influenced and was influenced by modern Indian art practices. At its core, Shifting Visions reflects on how formal art education, introduced and structured during the colonial era, laid the groundwork for India's engagement with modernism. Through a striking mix of student works, sketches, and archival material alongside masterpieces from the DAG collection and school archives, it offers a rich narrative and critique of institutional impact on artistic identity, highlighting stylistic, ideological, and social shifts in artistic expression.

We wish our readers a fruitful engagement and invite them to spread the word and contribute their own research in our future issues.

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*Photograph by Smita Dalvi*